

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A delivery system comprising at least one active component encapsulated within an encapsulating material, the delivery system having a tensile strength of at least 10,000 psi, and which is free of solvent or comprises a tensile strength modifying agent selected from the group consisting of a fat, an emulsifier, a low molecular weight polymer, a high molecular weight polymer, a wax, hydrogenated oil, a glycerol monostearate, triacetin, glycerin, a rosin ester, mineral oil, fatty acid, and combinations thereof.
2. (Previously Presented) The delivery system of claim 1 wherein the tensile strength of the delivery system is from about 10,000 psi to 200,000 psi.
3. (Previously Presented) The delivery system of claim 1 wherein the edible composition is selected from the group consisting of a food product, a pharmaceutical composition, a foodstuff, a nutrient-containing composition, a vitamin, a neutraceuticals, and combinations thereof.
4. (Previously Presented) The delivery system of claim 1 wherein the edible composition is selected from a food product, a pharmaceutical composition, a foodstuff, a nutrient-containing composition, a vitamin, a neutraceutical, and combinations thereof.
5. (Original) The delivery system of claim 1 wherein the encapsulating material is selected from the group consisting of polyvinyl acetate, polyethylene, crosslinked polyvinyl pyrrolidone, polymethylmethacrylate, polylactidacid, polyhydroxyalkanoates,

ethylcellulose, polyvinyl acetatephthalate, polyethylene glycol esters, methacrylicacid-co-methylmethacrylate and combinations thereof.

6. (Original) The delivery system of claim 1 wherein the encapsulating material is present in an amount of from about 30% to 99% by weight based on the total weight of the delivery system.

7. (Original) The delivery system of claim 1 wherein the encapsulating material is present in an amount of from about 60% to 90% by weight based on the total weight of the delivery system.

8. (Previously Presented) The delivery system of claim 1 wherein the active component is selected from the group consisting of a sweetener, an acid, a flavorant, a pharmaceutical, a therapeutic agent, a vitamin, a breath freshener, a cooling agent and combinations thereof.

9. (Previously Presented) The delivery system of claim 1 wherein the active component is a high intensity sweetener.

10. (Previously Presented) The delivery system of claim 8 wherein the active component is a sweetener and is selected from the group consisting of an amino acid based sweetener, a dipeptide sweetener, glycyrrhizin, saccharin, a saccharin salt, an acesulfame salt, a cyclamate, a stevioside, talin, a dihydrochalone compound, a chlorinated sucrose polymer, and combinations thereof.

11. (Previously Presented) The delivery system of claim 9 wherein the high intensity sweetener is selected from the group consisting of neotame, aspartame, sucralose and a mixture thereof.

12. (Original) The delivery system of claim 8 wherein the active component is present in an amount of from about 1% to 70% by weight based on the total weight of the delivery system.

13. (Original) The delivery system of claim 1 wherein the active component is present in an amount of from about 10% to 40% by weight based on the total weight of the delivery system.

14. (Currently Amended) The delivery system of claim 1, which comprises ~~further comprising~~ a tensile strength modifying agent.

15. (Currently Amended) The delivery system of claim 14 wherein the tensile strength modifying agent is selected from the group consisting of a fat, an emulsifier, a plasticizer, ~~a softener~~, a low molecular weight polymer, a high molecular weight polymer, a wax, and combinations thereof.

16. (Previously Presented) The delivery system of claim 14 wherein the tensile strength modifying agent is selected from the group consisting of a hydrogenated oil, a glycerol monostearate, a wax, a low molecular weight polymer, triacetin, glycerin, a rosin ester, and combinations thereof.

17. (Original) The delivery system of claim 14 wherein the tensile strength modifying agent is present in an amount of up to 40% by weight based on the total weight of the delivery system.

18. (Original) The delivery system of claim 1 in the form of particles or granules.

19. (Original) The delivery system of claim 18 wherein the particles or granules have a particle size of up to 600 microns.

20. (Original) The delivery system of claim 19 wherein the particles or granules have a particle size of 75 to 600 microns.

21. (Previously Presented) An edible composition comprising at least one edible composition forming component and the delivery system of claim 1.

22. (Previously Presented) The edible composition of claim 21 selected from the group consisting of a chewing gum composition, a food product, a confectionery composition, a pharmaceutical composition, a beverage, a foodstuff, a nutrient-containing composition, a vitamin, a nutraceutical, and a combination thereof.

23. (Original) The edible composition of claim 21 wherein the encapsulating material is present in an amount of from about 0.2% to 10% by weight based on the total weight of the edible composition.

24. (Previously Presented) The edible composition of claim 22, which is a chewing gum composition and wherein the at least one edible forming component comprises a gum base.

25. (Previously Presented) The edible composition of claim 24 wherein the tensile strength of the delivery system is from about 10,000 psi to 200,000 psi.

26. (Previously Presented) The edible composition of claim 24 wherein the encapsulating material is present in an amount of from about 30% to 99% by weight based on the total weight of the delivery system.

27. (Previously Presented) The edible composition of claim 24 wherein the active component is selected from the group consisting of a sweetener, an acid, a flavorant, a pharmaceutical, a therapeutic agent, a vitamin, a breath freshener, a cooling agent and combinations thereof.

28. (Previously Presented) The edible composition of claim 24 wherein the active component is present in an amount of from about 1% to 70% by weight based on the total weight of the delivery system.

29. (Currently Amended) The edible composition of claim 24 wherein the encapsulating material ~~further~~ comprises a tensile strength modifying agent.

30. (Currently Amended) The edible composition of claim 29 wherein the tensile strength modifying agent is selected from the group consisting of a fat, an emulsifier, a

~~plasticizer, a softener,~~ a low molecular weight polymer, a high molecular weight polymer, a wax, and combinations thereof.

31. (Previously Presented) The edible composition of claim 22, which is a confectionary and which comprises a confectionery carrier.

32. (Currently Amended) The edible composition of claim 31 wherein the tensile strength of the delivery system is from about ~~6,500~~ 10,000 to 200,000 psi.

33. (Previously Presented) The edible composition of claim 31 wherein the encapsulating material is present in an amount of from about 30% to 99% by weight based on the total weight of the delivery system.

34. (Previously Presented) The edible composition of claim 31 wherein the active component is selected from the group consisting of a sweetener, an acid, a flavorant, a pharmaceutical, a therapeutic agent, a vitamin, a breath freshener, a cooling agent, and combinations thereof.

35. (Previously Presented) The edible composition of claim 31 wherein the active component is present in an amount of from about 1 % to 70% by weight based on the total weight of the delivery system.

36. (Currently Amended) The edible composition of claim 31 wherein the delivery system ~~further~~ comprises a tensile strength modifying agent.

37. (Currently Amended) The edible composition of claim 36 wherein the tensile strength modifying agent is selected from the group consisting of a fat, an emulsifier, a ~~plasticizer, a softener,~~ a low molecular weight polymer, a high molecular weight polymer, a wax, and combinations thereof.

Claims 38-46 (Cancelled)

47. (Previously Presented) A method of preparing the delivery system of claim 1, comprising encapsulating the at least one active component in the encapsulating material.

Claims 48-62 (Cancelled).

Claim 63. (Cancelled)

64. (Previously Presented) The delivery system of claim 1 wherein the tensile strength of the delivery system is at least about 22,000 psi.

65. (Previously Presented) The delivery system of claim 1 wherein the tensile strength of the delivery system is at least about 24,000 psi.

66. (Previously Presented) The delivery system of claim 1 wherein the tensile strength of the delivery system is at least about 42,000 psi.

67. (Previously Presented) The edible composition of claim 21, which comprises at least two delivery systems.

68. (Previously Presented) The edible composition of claim 67, wherein each of the at least two delivery systems comprise at least two different active component.

69. (Previously Presented) The edible composition of claim 67, wherein at least one active agent is a sweetener and a second active agent is a flavorant.

70. (Previously Presented) The edible composition of claim 66 wherein each of the at least two delivery systems has a different tensile strength.

Claims 71-87 (Cancelled).

88. (Previously Presented) The edible composition of claim 33, wherein the encapsulating material is present in an amount of from about 60 % to 90% by weight based on the total weight of the delivery system.

89. (Previously Presented) The edible composition of claim 35, wherein the active component is present in an amount of from about 10 to 40 % by weight based on the total weight of the delivery system.

90. (Previously Presented) The edible composition of claim 89, wherein the active component is present in an amount of from about 0.1 to 6 % by weight based on the total weight of the delivery system.

91. (Previously Presented) The edible composition of claim 89, wherein the active component is present in an amount of from about 0.5 to 3 % by weight based on the total weight of the delivery system.

92. (Previously Presented) The delivery system of claim 1, which is free of solvent.



93. (New) The delivery system of claim 1, which comprises a tensile strength modifying agent in an amount of from 5 to 20 %.

94. (New) The delivery system of claim 1, which comprises a tensile strength modifying agent in an amount of from 10 to 20 %.

95. (New) The delivery system of claim 1, which comprises a tensile strength modifying agent in an amount of from 5 to 10 %.

96. (New) The delivery system of claim 93, wherein the tensile strength modifying agent comprises fat.

97. (New) The delivery system of claim 94, wherein the tensile strength modifying agent comprises fat.

98. (New) The delivery system of claim 95, wherein the tensile strength modifying agent comprises fat.